THE BAZAINE TRIAL.

The Responsibility of Bazaine Before History—What He Did and What He Should Have Done.

Duty of Military Commanders Henceforth.

A Warning to Generals in All Lands.

PARIS, Dec. 21, 1873.

Before Marshal Bazaine's trial assumes the dimness of a historical event it may be well to take a last glance at its main bearings and to consider the permanent impression which it is destined to leave on the minds of the French army. There is the more reason for so doing, as the opinions of French military men will but reflect those of soldiers the whole world over, for all of whom this trial will be of lasting importance. The era of human wars is unhappily far from closed. Any general, French or foreign, may be placed before long in the position which Bazaine occupied three years ago, and, under such circumstances, the precedent of Bazaine's case could not fail to be used, either by the General himself as a guide for his conduct, or by a court martial sitting in judgment on the General, if he repeated any of the offences and errors for which the ex-Commander of Metz has been condemned. The Trianon court have, in fact, laid down a clear code of military duties, and it concerns officers of every nation, and to a certain degree civilians also, to know accurately what those duties are.

THE COUNTS OF THE BAZAINE IMPEACHMENT.

Bazaine was virtually condemned on nine counts, although these nine were nominally condensed into four:—

First—For having capitulated with an army without having done all that was possible to defeat the enemy, or, at all events, to inflict heavy losses on them.

Second—For having surrendered a citadel under similar conditions—that is, before having exhausted all the means of resistance.

Third—For having surrendered his citadel without destroying its fortifications, arsenals and stores, and his forces without having previously burned their flags, caused their rifles to be broken and their guns to be rendered useless.

Fourth—For having spoken in discouraging terms to his subalterns and even to private soldiers, with a view to impressing upon them that resistance was useless.

Fifth—For having, at a council of war of the principal generals under his orders, concealed from these generals that he had already entered into negotiations with the enemy and having consequently induced them to approve certain resolutions of his, under wrong information.

Sixth—For having dishonorably tried to shield his own responsibility behind the approval of the generals who, as above said, had been deceived by him.

Seventh—For having entered into negotiations of a military and political character with an individual who had no credentials to show, and for having informed this person, who turned out subsequently to be a spy of the enemy, that the citadel and garrison could not hold out beyond a specified date.

Eighth—For having previously to the blockade in Metz acted in defiance of certain despatches, which adjured him to march to the relief of Metz; and for having on his part forwarded untruthful despatches, declaring that such a march was impossible.

Ninth—For having sacrificed his military duty to political considerations, and having in particular refused to recognize and act in co-operation with a government that was being obeyed by the majority of the nation, and which was *de facto* the government of the land, the Emperor being a prisoner and the Empress having fled from the country.

WHAT BAZAINE SHOULD HAVE DONE BEFORE THE SIEGE OF METZ.

As it is scarcely probable that a general of any important country outside France will ever find himself in Bazaine's political predicament—that is, be under the necessity of transferring his allegiance to a revolutionary government, sprung up in the midst of a war—we may dismiss the ninth count, and, examining only the first eight, proceed to consider what Bazaine should have done. In the first place, then, after the Rhine army of 160,000 men was entrusted to his care he should have spread it over several roads in order that it might reach the Meuse the faster and there operate its junction with MacMahon's forces. Had he done this, instead of massing all his men on a single road, the Germans would never have had time to head him at Mars-la-Tour. But, granted that by a miracle of promptitude the Germans had still succeeded in placing themselves between his army and the Meuse, then Bazaine, after defeating them at Mars-la-Tour, as he actually did, should have attacked them on the following day before reinforcements had arrived to their rescue. Prince Frederic Charles acknowledges that if Bazaine had followed up his advantage at Mars-la-Tour by coming to action early the next morning the Germans would have been obliged to retreat, not being numerous enough to oppose the 160,000 men, and, as a consequence of their retreat, Bazaine and MacMahon would have been able to join their armies and make a stand on the plains of Châlons, where, with 300,000 men between them, they would have been almost invincible. Far from doing this, Bazaine spent the day after Mars-la-Tour in complete inactivity, then began a backward march upon Metz. The Germans, reinforced by this time, accordingly went in pursuit of him, defeated him at Gravelotte, and, having thus permanently cut off his communications with the Meuse, drove him into Metz and set to work to blockade him.

WHAT BAZAINE SHOULD HAVE DONE IN METZ.

Bazaine's incapacity—putting the most favorable construction on his negligence—thus caused the defeat of MacMahon, by allowing the latter to be outnumbered. But admitting, for argument's sake, that after doing his best to reach the Meuse Bazaine had been vanquished by superior forces, strategy or by a combination of unfortunately adverse circumstances—admitting, in fact, that his retreat into Metz had been inevitable—then what should have been his conduct once he was blockaded? Here his duty became clear. To have attacked the Germans on the morrow of Mars-la-Tour perhaps required a certain dose of genius for the absence of which a general cannot be held criminal; but to play his part worthily inside Metz it only needed the common sum of good sense which must lurk in every office of high rank. The German army around Metz never at any time numbered more than 200,000 men; and, having in all no less than 170,000 men under him in Metz, Bazaine should have attacked the 200,000 without respite, at all points, every day and night. He should have ordered sortie after sortie, kept the enemy continually on the lookout, risked any losses on his own side in order to inflict losses on them, harass, fatigue and dishearten them. In the solitary sortie of any consequence which Bazaine did make, but 10 days only before the capitulation (October 10), the Germans suffered such loss as proved conclusively what would have been the result had these sorties been commenced and repeated without cease since the beginning of September. But the Germans themselves admit that if Bazaine had offered a determined resistance the consequences must have been these: the Germans could not have kept up the siege with 200,000 men, and would have been obliged to send for reinforcements and so weaken the forces around Paris and on the Loire. Meanwhile the French armies on the Loire having less or no hostile forces to contend with, would have been in a position to relieve Paris, which was only blockaded by 180,000 men, and the Germans, too prudent to risk a struggle with the Loire armies and with the garrison of Paris at such unequal odds, would have raised the siege of the capital. Indeed, as it was General Moltke doubted at the beginning of October whether it would be possible to continue the siege of Paris, and was making preparations for retreat. The siege of Paris was only commenced under the supposition that the Parisians would not resist. Once it became evident that they meant to hold out, it would have been impossible to blockade them effectually had the army in Metz done its duty. General Moltke was too shrewd to expose himself to a defeat under the walls of Paris, for such a defeat must have degenerated into a rout.

WHAT BAZAINE SHOULD HAVE DONE IF FORCED TO CAPITULATE.

"But," it may be urged, "if Bazaine had properly defended himself in Metz he would only have succeeded in massing the entire strength of the Germans round his citadel, and he would have been forced to yield in the end." Possibly; but a general's duty is to consider how best he may serve the common interests of the country, and the prospect of losing his own entire army has no business to check his operations. If Bazaine had forced the Germans to raise the siege of Paris the capitulation of Metz would have been but of secondary importance. He was bound, however, to prolong his resistance in Metz until it was absolutely impossible, from want of food and ammunition, to hold out any longer, and, when the capitulation loomed ahead as unavoidable, then he should have opened negotiations with the enemy and stipulated that all his garrison should march out with the honors of war—that is, free to go away with their arms under pledge of not fighting again during the campaign. If the enemy had been kept in ignorance of the exhaustion of supplies inside the city it is probable they might have acceded to these terms; but had they not done so, then it was Bazaine's duty to act as Todleben did at Sebastopol—blow up his fortifications, destroy the arsenals and casemates, smash all his rifles and cannon, drench his ammunition and burn his flags and stores, so that nothing whatever should have fallen into the hands of the enemy. Thus the capitulation of Metz would have been one of the grandest, most heroic on record.

SUMMARY.

Now, suppose Bazaine had acted in the manner above sketched, the Germans, in possession of dismantled Metz, would have one of two alternatives—they might either have marched back upon Paris or have offered to conclude peace, and all the probabilities are that they would have adopted the latter course. To march back and face the Loire armies and those of the North, arrayed with the Paris garrisons under the walls of the capital, would have been a measure demanding more men and more energy than the Germans would have been able to bring to bear after a protracted warfare round Metz. The armies under Paris would have had time to organize themselves, to fortify their positions, to establish themselves securely on every river and eminence around Paris, and the Germans would have known well that if they attacked these reorganized armies unsuccessfully their retreat from France must have resembled the rout of Napoleon's Grand Army in the Russian campaign of 1812. Therefore, Count Bismarck would have offered peace; but a peace offered with a strong and undefeated French army still in the field could have comprised no humiliating conditions. At most a small war indemnity would have been stipulated, but there could have been no talk of annexing Alsace and Lorraine or of subjecting France to a foreign occupation. It follows, then, from all this, that Bazaine is really responsible for the loss of two provinces and for all the cruel depradations which have accompanied that loss. He may urge in extenuation—and, indeed, he does so—that he could not foresee all that would happen and did not order sorties because he wished to save his army from being uselessly decimated. But the answer to this is one which a general must henceforth lay to heart:—He is bound to defend himself to the death without counting the losses he may incur. War is not a humanitarian game, but if it were, humane considerations should still have prompted Bazaine to attack the enemy without mercy and without regard for himself, seeing that every man slain in defending Metz would have spared two or three lives in other parts of France—to say nothing of the tears that have been shed over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine—tears which must count for something in computing the horrors of war.

HISTORICAL PARALLELS TO BAZAINE'S CASE.

Seven Marshals of France Sentenced to Death in Four Centuries.

PARIS, Dec. 23, 1873.

Everybody in France is still under the impression of the sentence pronounced on Marshal Bazaine, and we are likely to be so for yet some time to come. The commutation of the prisoner's penalty and his transfer to the State Prison of the Island of Ste. Marguerite will prevent the ex-Commander of Metz fading out of people's memories, as he might have done had he been shot, the French being proverbially hasty in forgetting the dead. So long as he lives his name, his fortunes, his errors or crimes will be matters of household talk wherever two or three Frenchmen are gathered together to discuss the events of the late war. It is as yet too early to judge what permanent effect the trial of the "great scapegoat" will produce on the minds of the nation. For the present the immense majority of the French people have heartily ratified the verdict of the judges, but whether they will continue doing so after the first gust of excitement has blown over, is another question? There is so much mercuriality in the French that there is no prognosticating to-day what may be the public mood to-morrow; least of all is it safe to prophesy when the point at issue is one invoking so many burning political topics. This much, however, one may say—namely, that the commutation has generally been considered an act of weakness on the part of President MacMahon. When Rossel was tried for his participation in the Commune he declared that he had thrown up his commission in the regular army because he was convinced that Marshal Bazaine, under whose orders he had served, had betrayed Metz; "and after that," added he, "I could have no further confidence in any of our chiefs." To this Colonel Merlior, who presided over the court martial, answered, with indignation:—"Your suspiciousness of treachery does but aggravate your crime. It showed a tortuous, unpatriotic mind; for how dared you suppose that a Marshal who has attained to the highest honors by his bravery and his loyalty would be guilty of anything unworthy? But even if you had known for certain that your commander had betrayed his trust it was your duty to wait until he was judged by the laws of his country. For our laws are the same for all." Now, Rossel was shot and Bazaine, his chief, is to spend 20 years in a sunny island, where his wife and children will be allowed to reside with him; where he will have a fine suit of rooms, all the necessaries, and even as many of the luxuries, of life as he chooses to pay for, and where he will be under no other restraint than that of not leaving the five square miles of field, garden land and sandy beach of which the island is composed. To the popular mind this seems an unequal apportionment of penalties—the more so as there are thousands of humble Communists far less guilty than either Rossel or Bazaine, and who yet have been transported to New Caledonia for the term of their natural lives and live there as close prisoners. But there have ever been two sets of scales in Justice's hand—one for great culprits, who get short weight of punishment; the other for the small ones, who never fail to obtain the utmost particle.

HISTORICAL PARALLELS.

Bazaine is the eighth Marshal of France who has been condemned to death since the fifteenth century, when the rank of marshal was first created. He is, however, the only one of the eight who obtained a respite, for all the others underwent their sentence in its ignominy. The first was

GILLES DE LAVAL, MARSHAL OF RETZ,

born at Machecoul in 1404. He distinguished himself greatly in the wars against the English, and especially at the siege of Orleans, headed by Joan of Arc, in 1429. But in time of peace he allowed his thirst for lucre to get the better of him, and having murdered two of his cousins and his wife to obtain possession of their property he was tried by the Parliament of Brittany and sentenced to be hanged like a common felon and afterwards burned. He pleaded hard to be beheaded, according to the prerogative of his rank, but his judges refused this request, and Marshal de Retz was hanged to the public gibbet of Nantes in 1440. The people had surnamed him Blue Beard. The second ill-starred marshal was

LOUIS DE LUXEMBOURG,

Count of St. Pol, Grand Constable of France, who was born in 1413 and beheaded on the Place de Grève in Paris, in 1475, for conspiring against Louis XI. This marshal did not go to the scaffold with a brave face. He screamed and struggled, and the executioner struck him four times with the axe before severing his head from his body. St. Pol's execution was intended by Louis XI. to act as a warning to the entire French nobility, who had been growing very turbulent. It was the first blow struck at the feudal independence and inviolability of the nobles, and it succeeded well in its object.

CHARLES DE GONTAUT, DUKE AND MARSHAL DE BIRON,

was the next French marshal who suffered death at the headsman's hands. He was the intimate friend of Henri IV., who had thrice saved his life in battle; but, being of a restless temper and unscrupulously ambitious, he was constantly dabbling in conspiracies against his king and benefactor. Twice Henri IV. detected and pardoned him; but Biron's third conspiracy was exceptionally grave. He lent himself to a plan hatched by Spain and the Duke of Savoy for morselling France into several small States, and his reward for this disloyal co-operation was to be the sovereignty of Burgundy and the hand of the Duke of Savoy's daughter. When this conspiracy was brought to light Henri IV. sent for Biron and promised he should not be punished if he made a full confession. But he obstinately refused to speak, and so the King abandoned him to his fate. He was tried by the Parliament of Paris, sentenced to death, and beheaded inside the Bastille in 1602, at the age of 40. If ever a marshal justly suffered death it was assuredly this Biron; nevertheless Henri IV., in the excellence of his heart, repented to his dying day not having once more pardoned the man who had so ungratefully requited his numerous benefits. He used to say, "Poor Biron, conspiring was a second nature with him." The next two marshals were victims of Cardinal Richelieu.

HENRY II., DUKE AND MARSHAL DE MONTMORENCY, and premier peer of France, was the commander of the Huguenot faction. Made a prisoner at the battle of Castelnaudary, where the Protestants suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Louis XIII.'s Catholic troops, he was tried for high treason, convicted and executed in the court yard of the Capitol at Toulouse, in 1632. He was 37 years old.

MARSHAL DE MARILTAL

was another Huguenot. He conspired against Richelieu and was kidnapped by stealth at night from the midst of his camp, and beheaded in Paris in 1632. We come now to two victims of the Revolution.

MARSHAL BARON DE LUCKNER

was of German origin. He served under Frederick II., in the Seven Years' war, and inflicted great losses on the French. But at the peace he settled in France, got naturalized and was raised to the marshalate. At the Revolution he was given a command in the French armies; took Constral and Menin and defeated the Austrians at Valenciennes, but the Revolutionary tribunal decided that a marshal, baron and an ex-German could be no true republican, and so guillotined him in 1794.

PHILIPPE DE NOAILLES,

Duke and Marshal de Mouchy, was born in 1715, and was one of the most distinguished soldiers of the last century. In 1789 he was appointed Governor of Versailles, and when the mob came from Paris, on the 5th October, to carry off the royal family, he fought in defence of his sovereign until wounded and overpowered. The terrorists remembered this in 1794 and guillotined him like his colleague, Luckner.

MARSHAL NEY,

who was shot in 1815, was the seventh Marshal of France who suffered public execution. As is well known, his crime consisted in having deserted to Napoleon's side when he was sent by Louis XVIII. to check the Emperor, who had fled from Elba. He fought at Waterloo and was promised amnesty by the terms of the capitulation of Paris, but party spirit among the royalists was too hot against him. He was tried by the House of Peers and sentenced to death with but one dissentient vote. This vote was that of the late Duke de Broglie, father of the present French Premier.

MECHELLA'S LAST DAY.

All Hopes Fled—The Gallows Waiting For Its Victim—The Condemned Man Calm and Secluded.

This is the last day for Mechella, the murderer, upon this earth. At three o'clock yesterday afternoon the preparations for the execution were completed. The executioner tested the rope, the noose and the weights in presence of 30 odd gaping spectators. The new gallows worked well, thought every one of them, while the man of death hauled down the rope, chuckled and felt satisfied. Up the wall from the outside climbed an adventurous youth, who wanted to see what was going on, but he was hauled down by the leg, and the imprecation that followed gave rise to some levity altogether unpardonable among those standing in presence of the machinery of death. All through the day small groups visited the jail yard and lingered around the building. Every visitor desired to see the condemned prisoner, but the prohibition previously published was strictly enforced. The seclusion of the unfortunate man had a salutary effect, for he became at once tractable and calm. Deputy Sheriff O'Brien, aided by two prisoners, kept watch over him during the day. He submitted to the terrible test of being fitted by a tailor with clothing for the grave without any visible emotion. Norton, the boarding house keeper with whom Mechella boarded just previous to the commission of the murder, was admitted to see him, but after the exchange of a few sentences, Mechella appeared tired of the interview and told Norton to call again. Norton, however, will take charge of the body after death and convey it to New York. The funeral expenses will be defrayed by the Russian Consul. After Norton and the tailor left, the doomed man walked up and down, with folded arms, in a very quiet mood, the irons having been removed for the day. For the sake of his peace of mind no further announcement of his approaching death will be made till this morning. If he should become boisterous and violent he will be bound and carried to the gallows; but this course, the Sheriff thinks, will not be necessary, as the prisoner is troublesome only when visitors approach his cell.

Contrary to expectation the Sheriff has issued passes to 250 persons, including 30 members of the press, 31 freeholders, 37 physicians and all the county officers. With such a crowd the maintenance of order within the small yard of the jail will be a work of some difficulty. Deputy Sheriff Cronan was the only officer who seemed to have any regard for the convenience of members of the press, for, in order to relieve them from being hustled and crowded out he caused the erection of seats on the roof of the washroom, within the yard. Coroners Reinhardt and Mahan were in the jail several hours, and they complained bitterly of the manner in which they have been treated by County Physician Buck, who intends to take charge of the body and give a permit for burial after death. The Coroners declared that they will not tolerate such interference, as the usurpation of their functions under a recent enactment is an outrage on the community. If any scandal should arise out of the quarrel between the County Physician and the Coroners to-day, that enactment will be swept out of sight at the coming session of the Legislature. Loud complaints were also made against the Sheriff for his discrimination in issuing passes, but this was to be expected. Judging from the calibre and social standing of many of those who flourished their passes yesterday, the Sheriff made some unfortunate selections. It is to be regretted that Judge Bedle did not issue the customary warning to the Sheriff to have the execution conducted as privately as possible.

The militia, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Toffey, will form in line at the jail at eight o'clock this morning. The officers of the Court will preserve order within the jail. A wooden fence on the wall of the yard and an awning over the gallows shuts off the view from outsiders. No person will be allowed to approach the walls on the outside. As the prisoner's brother took his final leave of him yesterday, no person will be permitted to approach him, except the Rev. Messrs. Hedstrom and Rice, up to the final moment. His brother held a long conversation with a group near the jail a few days ago, in which he stated that his father and mother in Finland knew nothing of the fate of their wretched son, nor will he inform them for some months. He will then write simply that Jacob is dead. At a late hour last evening the prisoner was becoming resigned and realized his awful position. The deputies in charge stated that they predicted this long ago. Mechella finds that the authorities are in earnest with him at last.

THE MORRISANIA HOMICIDE.

The investigation in regard to the death of Edward Donohue, who was injured at Melrose on the 16th ult. by a young man named Michael Tierney, was concluded at Morrisania on Wednesday evening. Although evidence was given showing that the accused used undue violence toward deceased on the day named, the jury thought otherwise, as they rendered a verdict of "death by congestion of the brain, superinduced by intemperance." Tierney was accordingly discharged.

THE WORKINGMEN'S DEMONSTRATIONS.

Another Meeting Yesterday at Tompkins Square—What the Police Authorities Intend To Do—Views of Chief Matsell and President Smith.

Another grand workingmen's demonstration was announced to take place yesterday in Union square, but at eleven o'clock only a few hundred men were present. They behaved in a quiet, orderly manner, and, hearing that there was a large German gathering in Tompkins square, they marched thither. Instead of German workingmen, however, they found that the square was held by a squad of police, who denied them admission. Still, some of the men had already entered through another gate, which the police had not watched, and therefore no further attempts were made to prevent a meeting from being held. A strong posse of police, under command of Captain Walsh, remained on the ground to prevent any disturbance.

Mr. MAGUIRE, of the Seventeenth ward, addressed the workingmen. He dilated upon their great sufferings, and said the authorities and the Board of Assistant Aldermen were principally to blame. A series of resolutions were then adopted demanding work for the unemployed, the rigid enforcement of the Eight Hour law on public and private works, the abolition of the contract system under the city government, and the reduction of house rent 25 per cent for the benefit of the unemployed, and its total suspension until May!

The assemblage hurrahed and shouted when these resolutions were adopted, and then adjourned till Tuesday next, when they will take part in another demonstration arranged by the Committee of Safety.

As it was rumored that the workmen intended to march down to the City Hall, and as fears of violence were entertained, Captain Leary had 150 men at the City Hall police station, and General Duryea himself superintended their movements. The workingmen, however, dispersed peacefully at Tompkins square, without waiting upon the authorities at the City Hall.

ACTION OF THE POLICE AUTHORITIES.

There was a great council of war held yesterday morning at the office of the Superintendent of the Police, with reference to the demonstrations of the workingmen. First Mayor Havemeyer was in secret consultation with the Chief, then the District Attorney came and was closeted with the latter for quite a while, and the Commissioners also talked the matter over when they came down stairs. A reporter of the HERALD obtained the views of our great city dignitaries on this subject.

WHAT MAYOR HAVEMEYER SAYS.

Mayor Havemeyer said the police were ready to meet any emergency that could possibly arise, and the recent order of the Superintendent, requiring all men not on duty to report at their respective stations at once, and to be held in reserve until further notice, was issued in view of some such emergency. While the needs of the workingmen should be attended to it was necessary to protect the city against any excesses which some mischievous men among them might be led to commit. He recalled the time in 1857, when the failure of a large insurance company led the then Mayor (Wood) to propose that the "workingmen" should be supplied with an enormous quantity of flour. There was certainly no desire on anybody's part to see an honest workingman suffer, and he felt sure that everybody would be glad to help poor men who showed that they were willing to work. However, he did not approve of their using threatening and intimidating language, and thought that some of the men who were clamoring the loudest were men who had never done a week's work in their lives. A great many men were always out of work in a city like this, and particularly in the winter. It could not be helped, and the honest workingmen always saved something against these hard times. While he was willing to do for them all that was in his power it was necessary that measures should be taken to forestall any disturbances or excesses, and he thought the men who held these demonstrations understood this perfectly. He could not say more, as it was not well "to be too wise."

WHAT CHIEF MATSELL SAYS.

Superintendent Matsell said his recent order was certainly issued with a view to prevent any possible excesses or disturbances by the "workingmen." Their watchword was "Always ready!" and every blow they struck was for the maintenance of law, order and peace. When asked whether he apprehended any violence on the part of any of the workingmen he said he always did in every case, as it was his duty to apprehend violence every day and every hour and to keep the force constantly ready to meet any emergency. In regard to the rumored secret conclaves of workingmen he said he had heard a great many stories and rumors to this effect, and it was his duty to investigate every rumor which floated round. He could not say more, he added jocularly, as a good general never disclosed all his plans. This much was certain—the police would always be found ready to quell any disturbance within 30 minutes' notice. The men who had made these demonstrations and threatened to throw the Aldermen out of the windows were not the honest workingmen of the city, who were too orderly and peaceable to make use of such threats. This morning they were unable to draw more than 600 men to their meeting, although they had been talking of thousands of sympathizers.

WHAT PRESIDENT HENRY SMITH SAYS.

President Henry Smith said 1,500 policemen would be ready any time, day or night, to quell any riot, and by the arrangements now in force this number could arrive at any given point within 30 minutes. The Commissioners were determined not to allow any body of men to use incendiary language, and if Banks would again use his usual inflammatory language in public he would be arrested. People were arrested for bribing or attempting to bribe legislators, and why should they allow any body of men to coerce the Board of Aldermen or any legislative council? The means which these men, who called themselves "workingmen," but who were not workingmen, had endeavored to use were means of downright coercion. They had marched into a legislative body and demanded that the members should vote for certain bills even if they violated their own conscience by doing so. They had not asked them to pass certain bills if they deemed them just or reasonable, but they demanded that the Aldermen should pass these bills, whether they deemed them right or wrong. The police would not allow such unlawful interference in the future. These men were not workingmen—it was a misnomer to call them so. He did not believe that one honest workingman in the city was in sympathy with them. To-day they had had about 600 at their meeting, and if all the workingmen who were out of work were in sympathy with them they would have had a gathering of 10,000 at least. He was satisfied that these men were not half an inch ahead of the police, and that the latter were masters of the situation.

What these men wanted was not honest work, but plunder. The police, when they once struck the first blow, would strike heavily, and if the "plunderers" were caught in the slightest violation of the public peace they would be immediately arrested. Mr. Smith did not expect any outbreak at night, but thought they would choose the daytime, so that the thieves, who followed in their wake, might have a good opportunity to plunder. He alluded to the threat that they would throw the Aldermen out of the windows, and said they would not permit them to go so far. When asked whether any steps had been taken to insure the co-operation of the militia Mr. Smith said this was not necessary, as the police were perfect masters of the situation. He did not anticipate any trouble this week, as the "workingmen" would not hold another demonstration until next Tuesday, and they would surely wait until they were massed together in large numbers before using violence. However, the police "would be there."

Commissioner Gardner said, indignantly, that men should not be allowed to threaten Aldermen with throwing them out of windows; but Chief Matsell told him that he had already consulted the District Attorney in regard to this matter, and that he had advised them to wait for the first overt act of violence, so as to be sure to be in the right. The District Attorney stated to the HERALD reporter that he had no doubt the police were using all due vigilance to prevent any excesses.

"THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT."

Judge A. J. Requier, of this city, will to-night deliver a lecture for a charitable purpose in the Church of the New Jerusalem, Thirty-fifth street, between Lexington and Park avenues, on the above unique subject. The theme, while suggestive of much that is humorous and facetious, is more likely to be treated in a vein that will embody the results of research, familiarity with ancient lore and truths which we of the present day have either forgotten or ignored. The interest attaching to the subject has elicited the attention of many of the most distinguished men in New York, and they will doubtless be present to enjoy the literary and historic pleasure to be afforded by one of their own number.

ARREST OF AN ALLEGED DIAMOND THIEF.

Detectives Riggs and Butts, of the Brooklyn police, visited New York yesterday, armed with a warrant for the arrest of John Thompson, who is charged with larceny from the person. The complainant in the case is Mr. John Standard, of No. 381 Franklin avenue, who was robbed of a diamond pin of considerable value while riding on a Fulton avenue car about two weeks ago. The jewel was taken out of the shirt bosom of Mr. Standard and the suspicion of that gentleman fell upon the prisoner. The latter, who is 35 years of age and a native of this city, is said to belong to a gang of pickpockets who operate on the cars and on the streets. Thompson, who is now in the Washington street station, will be arraigned for examination to-day. The property has not been recovered.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Regular Monthly Meeting—Important Questions Under Consideration—The Bankrupt and Revenue Laws—Memorial and Resolutions To Be Presented to Congress—Report of the Special Committee on "Collisions at Sea and the Use of Electric and Other Lights."

The regular monthly meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held yesterday afternoon, at their rooms on William street, Vice President Samuel D. Babcock in the chair.

Following the approval of the minutes of recent meetings, regular and special, Mr. William J. McAlpine, on nomination of the Executive Committee, was elected an honorary member of the Chamber.

The resignation of Mr. A. A. Low as chairman of the Executive Committee was submitted and laid on the table.

The Executive Committee submitted the resignation of Mr. Charles A. Macy as trustee of the Institution for the Savings of Merchants' Clerks, and on recommendation it was accepted and Mr. Charles Lanier unanimously elected to fill the vacancy.

The committee also reported the decease of Mr. John Armstrong, a trustee of the same institution, appointed by the Chamber, and nominated Mr. James M. Constable to fill the vacancy. Mr. Constable was unanimously elected.

The committee submitted a letter from Mr. Benjamin B. Sherman, President of the New York Cheap Transportation Association, in reference to the objects of the association, which was referred to Committee No. 7 for consideration.

THE BANKRUPT LAW.

Mr. ELLIOTT C. COWDIN, of the Executive Committee, submitted the following memorial for the consideration of the Chamber:—

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:—

The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York respectfully represent to your honorable bodies that, in their opinion, the repeal of the existing Bankrupt law would be highly detrimental to the best interests of business men of all classes, whether debtors or creditors, throughout the entire country. That they believe that these interests will be best promoted by amending the existing law, in some important particulars, rather than by its total repeal. That they regard as among these amendments a provision that shall require a larger proportional share of creditors, both in number and amount, to put a debtor into bankruptcy than is necessary under the law as it now stands, and that greater safeguards than are now furnished be provided for securing to creditors the property of a bankrupt, and for preventing a waste of his assets in expenses and unnecessary litigation, and especially that stringent provisions be incorporated into the law to avoid those delays in its administration, now so prejudicial to both debtors and creditors.

SPEECH OF ELLIOTT C. COWDIN.

In support of this memorial Mr. Cowdin said that covert and very energetic efforts are going on to procure the repeal of the Bankrupt law. The recent hasty action of the House of Representatives does not, in his judgment, reflect the enlightened opinion of the country. It seems to be a sudden offshoot of that impatient spirit which would reform a system by destroying it. For a long period the foremost nations of Europe have maintained a bankrupt system, which, though often amended, has never been abolished. Two primary propositions should be held—first, a uniform national bankrupt law and not a variety of State insolvent laws meets the exigency; second, that the national system should be a part of the settled policy of the country. There are equally good reasons for having a permanent bankrupt system that there are for having a permanent system of limitation in regard to the time at which suits can be brought. Mr. Cowdin closed a very argumentative speech in these words:—

Believing as I do that its total repeal would be highly injurious to the trade and industry of the nation, and that its defects can be remedied by judicious amendments, it seems to me to be the duty of this Chamber, as the representative of the first commercial city of the country, to present to Congress a respectful memorial, urging its modification, but against the absolute repeal of the law.

Mr. RUGGLES desired to amend the memorial with the introduction of "and also safeguards for *bona fide* purchasers from the bankrupt," which was accepted by Mr. Cowdin, when the memorial was unanimously adopted by the Chamber.

THE REVENUE LAWS.

Mr. JONATHAN STURGES, on the part of Committee No. 4, submitted the following in relation to the subject of the Revenue laws:—

Your committee, to whom was referred the general subject of the Revenue laws, have given these laws great consideration during a period of months past, and have had the results of the labors of an expert in these laws and their administration laid before them. The subject is a vast one, and the committee have felt that it is not desirable for the Chamber to enter into it in detail, as if preparing an act for the levying and collection of a tariff. Such a labor would be immense, and probably its practical effects of but little value. But the committee are decidedly of the opinion that the Chamber should pronounce, in no equivocal manner, against the abuses which have sprung up under the revenue laws, and should earnestly call upon the Congress of the nation to amend these laws so as to terminate the inducement to these abuses and render their continuance impossible.

We have seen the United States, with every facility for dealing honorably with importers and at the same time justly enforcing its laws, hold its powers as a rod of terror over the commerce of the country and offer the hope of large pecuniary rewards to designing and unscrupulous or poor and avaricious officers in its own employment. When the importer presents his invoice of goods and the goods themselves to the United States and asks what amount of duty he shall pay the answer ought to be prompt and final. The United States, supplied with the quotations of every market in the world, requiring its own Consul to certify to the correctness of every invoice in the place of exportation, appointing its own appraisers in the port of importation and requiring the oath of the importer, ought, with all these sources of information and appliances for detecting fraud, to give, within a reasonable time, a final answer to the question, "What duty is to be paid on this invoice?" But such is not the practice. The merchant is left in a state of uncertitude. In many cases he neither knows whether he sells at a profit or loss, or whether he may not, months after complying in good faith with every demand or the United States, be branded as a defrauder of the government, the sacredness of his private domicile invaded, his books arbitrarily seized and his property confiscated. Such an operation of the law works a hideous tyranny. In no civilized country, so far as your committee has been able to learn, is there any such uncertain, unequal, oppressive set of laws as these Revenue laws of our boasted free Republic.

When goods are about to be confiscated under these laws there is generally a compromise effected. But is this compromise for the benefit of the government? or helps it to a purer administration of the laws? Or does it deter intentional acts of fraud by importers? By no means. It is a premium held out to dishonest importers, and half the amount of the compromise goes into private pockets of informers, who are aided by a minute and foolish amount of technicality in the laws, which are of uncertain meaning, and decisions upon which are continually conflicting.

The committee therefore content themselves at present with reporting that reforms should be demanded by the Chamber, and they submit the following resolutions and recommend their adoption:—

Resolved, That in the judgment of this Chamber the laws under which the customs duties are now collected are complex, cumbrous and difficult to understand, and, in connection with the demoralizing system of rewarding informers by moieties, and with the arbitrary powers vested in officers who are themselves informers to seize books and papers, they too commonly serve as a trap for honest importers and an encouragement to corruption, oppression and private bribery.

Resolved, That these evils are so great and are exerting so destructive an influence on the morals of trade that we respectfully ask of Congress, in the name of the commerce of the country, at once to do away with all awards to informers and all penalties and confiscations for the benefit of salaried officers of the customs; to take from such officers all powers of arbitrary seizure of books and papers, and to enforce the sacredness of private correspondence when entrusted to the nation's keeping in the mails.

Resolved, That the difficulty of understanding a complex system of customs, and the facilities for fraud afforded by them, are considerations which imperatively call for the abolition of ad valorem duties and of compound duties, and the substitution for them of simple specific duties wherever possible.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to present these resolutions to Congress, in the name of the Chamber, and to take such other measures as they may deem proper to secure reformatory legislation on these subjects.

SPEECH OF JACKSON S. SCHULTZ.

The report of the committee being accepted, Mr. JACKSON S. SCHULTZ spoke at length in favor of the passage of the resolutions. He said that he was a willing witness before the community and the country of what he knew and had seen. The last year had revealed the fact either that there was great depravity among the merchants of the country or that the revenue officials had been particularly diligent and faithful. He instanced the great and irreparable injury done by the wrongful seizure of books of mercantile firms and their fair names tarnished and reputations as men of probity destroyed forever, and argued that the existing laws demanded amendment. The moieties received by informers when judgments are found against defendants are shared alike by all officials, from the Collector of the Port down to the Clerk of the Court that empanels the jury. He thought that whatever share of this plunder had been received by the government should not longer defile the public treasury. That given to informers could not now be reached, but that in the hands of the government can be and should be. The speaker then instanced the class of revenue cases that had come under his observation. First, were the diamond cases, and under this head was that of a merchant who had been annoyed by the customs officials regarding a package of these precious stones of which his agent abroad had apprised him. Taking all known rightful steps in the matter, such as apprising the Collector, he found at last that the diamonds had been seized, and it was at great expense that he could finally obtain them. And then, too, a letter which the Collector had been notified would be sent to the owner in his care, had been opened before the latter was apprised of its receipt. Such practices were strongly denounced. Second, were the sugar cases, and these prove a rich placer for informants. Under this head outrages were also recounted; one being that of a West India merchant, who for 25 years had pursued a certain course in swearing to the quality of the sugar cargoes he had received, but at last government detectives caused suit brought against him for the under-valuation of a certain cargo which had months before passed out of his hands. The jury found him guilty and he was fined the full amount of the value of the sugar and the costs of Court, amounting to over $54,000. Not at once settling, he was arrested at midnight, and, though 75 years of age, dragged by rough officers to a dirty prison. After searching through two States to ascertain the amount of property the merchant had in his name the matter was compromised for the sum of $10,000, his entire available proceeds. Other cases of wrong and injustice were cited, and Mr. Schultz moved the adoption of the resolutions, which received the unanimous vote of the Chamber.

The committee called for to present the resolutions to Congress were then appointed by the Chair, being Jackson S. Schultz, James S. T. Stranahan and Joseph Seligman.

COLLISIONS AT SEA.

Mr. JOHN AUSTIN STEVENS, Jr., on the part of the special committee to whom was referred the resolutions on the subject of "collisions at sea and the use of electric and other lights," submitted copies of memorials to Congress praying for the establishment of an "International commission of the maritime powers, to consider the subject of collisions at sea, and their remedy," and also a report, in which they say:—

In the case of the Ville du Havre, though the catastrophe itself might not have been avoided, which is not probable, had a brilliant light shown the steamer's course the chances of escape would have been immeasurably increased.

It is natural, then, to inquire why, if such advantages can be secured by the use of powerful lights, they have not been already adopted by our ocean steam lines? The answer to this is that, until quite recently, all such lights have been extremely costly, both from the complicated nature of the optical instruments and the nature of the substance consumed.

The principle of the Drummond light is the projection of an oxhydrogen flame upon lime, the intense incandescence of the limestone emitting a light of extreme brilliancy and power. But the production of the necessary heat is so costly in this light, and its management requires so much scientific care, that it has not been of practical use at sea.

Later discoveries in electricity, or rather in the application of its properties, have done away with the necessity of any combustible matter. The principle of the "electric light" is the production of intense heat by the interruption of the electrical circuit, the heat rendering incandescent the carbon cones which terminate the wire conductors at the opposing points of separation. Until quite recently, however, the production of the current of electricity has involved a chemical process of too nice a character to be readily or continuously carried on at sea. But within a few years a way has been found to develope the electrical current by mechanical force brought to bear upon magnetic bars. A simple machine contains a number of powerful magnets, distributed on an immovable frame, their poles toward the centre; within the group of magnets are coils of soft iron, enclosed in copper wire and wrapped with silk. These coils are attached to an axle, which, as it is turned by motive power, presents or withdraws the end of each coil to or from a pole of one of the fixed magnets. The currents thus established are of great power, because of great rapidity. All these separate coil currents are combined in one single current of enormous power, which is in turn carried to the carbon points of interruption, and produces a light which, being constantly maintained from the short intervals at which the curent arrives and passes from point to point, has all the character of a fixed light. Of course the intensity of the light depends wholly upon the rapidity with which the axle moves. This, one of the most important and valuable of the recent discoveries of science, is called the "magneto-electric" light. The light developed in this manner is claimed to be equal to that of 350 carcels, the ordinary mode of measurement, and to be only 2½ times less than sunlight, and to be capable of penetrating a fog for a distance of two miles.

Successful experiments were first made with this light by the French government during the fall of 1870, the year of the war, from the Phare at St. Adresse, Havre, better known as the "Cap de la Heve," and it is said to be visible from this elevated position at 40 miles distance.

Its peculiar advantages over all other powerful lights for steamship vessels consist in the facts, that there is no combustible matter necessary to its use: that no chemical agencies are required, and that the mechanical force requisite for the development of the electrical current may be supplied without additional cost by the motive power of the steam engine itself.

Moreover, this light has had the advantage of a practical trial at sea. It was in successful use on board the steamer St. Laurent, of the French Transatlantic line, in the summer of 1870, and was only removed from that vessel by order of the French government, who placed it upon the fortifications of Paris, where its power enabled the defence to arrest the raising of Prussian batteries at night at the points thus illuminated. Mr. Mackenzie, the esteemed and worthy agent of the French line and member of this Chamber, in reply to a communication addressed to him on the subject of "the probable cost of this light," writes, "That while unable to positively say what the cost of using the light was per day (on the St. Laurent)" he thought "that it was not much, as the power to work the machine was derived from the steam required for the propulsion of the steamer without any additional consumption of coal." If it be thought desirable to separate the power to work the machine from the general steam power of the ship, a two-horse engine will supply sufficient driving force, at an expense of a few bushels of coal per day.

The patent of the "magneto-electric" light for the American Continent is now held by the American Magneto-Electric Light Company of New York. Upon application to them your committee was informed that the original cost of the machine is about $2,000, and that the running expense where motive power exists is about three cents per hour.

In the belief of your Committee, the facts here stated fully warrant them in urging upon the Chamber of Commerce the propriety of requesting Congress to pass an act, requiring that all steamers shall carry a light equal in brilliancy and power to that herein described. Should any better or cheaper be devised, it would naturally take its place. None in the knowledge of your committee at present competes with it in either of these respects.

LIFE RAFTS.

Mr. STEVENS also offered the following resolutions, bearing upon the same subject, which were adopted:—

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Chamber it should be required by law that every steamship, carrying passengers, be provided with life rafts for the further safety of life, the extent of boat accommodation being notoriously inadequate, and the launching so uncertain, while the almost total absence of any wood or floating material in modern iron constructions leaves the unfortunate victim of accident without other means of even transient safety than the boats afford.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Chamber there is no better form of life raft than that which is known as the Monitor Life Saving Raft, which has received the prize medal at the Paris Exposition and at other exhibitions in this country, and has the warm endorsement of high officers of the United States Navy.

Resolved, That these resolutions be transmitted to Congress, with a request that they be laid before the International Commission on Marine Disasters, for the establishment of which the Chamber recently memorialized Congress, or take such other course as may seem to it wise to order.

The Chamber then adjourned until to-morrow afternoon at half-past two o'clock.

TENNESSEE MUSINGS.

Politics and Finance in Andy Johnson's Home—Railroad Burdens—Crop Movements.

NASHVILLE, Jan. 4, 1874.

The political atmosphere here is quiet just now, though the parties are arranging their forces for the elections of the present year.

ANDREW JOHNSON

has been with us for the last two weeks. His aims and purposes have not been well defined, and the leaders of both parties are disinclined to take him up. As an independent candidate he can accomplish nothing. He developed his full strength in the last election, receiving about 35,000 votes. His course embittered the democratic leaders to such an extent that they will never affiliate with him again. He is the first prominent politician that has openly and boldly denounced the late civil war. The republicans are kindly disposed towards Mr. Johnson, but his hostility to General Grant drives them from him. The republican party in this State feels that it owes to him its success in the last Congressional election; but his star is evidently declining; he will sink between the two parties.

THE FINANCIAL PROSPECTS OF THIS STATE

are not bright. Its outstanding bonds with their funded interest amount to $30,000,000. A revenue law was passed at the last session of the Legislature to meet the interest in July and January, which will amount to nearly $1,800,000. The revenue assessed will be sufficient to pay the interest, but not the current expenses of the government. The State officials are already, under an act of the Legislature, reserving the money to pay the July interest, and are issuing warrants for the ordinary expenses, which pass in the market at a discount. This state of things will not long exist, as the people will become clamorous for the payment of their claims. The reissuing of the bonds and the funding of the accumulated interest by the last Legislature have become exceedingly unpopular. The annual

INTEREST OF THE STATE DEBT IS INCREASED

to $300,000, and it is looked upon as a scheme of the bondholder and the railroad monopolists. The bonds were secured by statutory mortgages on roads; and they having been sold, the purchasers were anxious to be relieved, and the bondholder wanted interest on his unpaid interest, and hence, through their influence and that of the Governor and his friends, who were warm advocates of the measure, the bill was passed. The present State officials have lost the confidence of their party, and there is "none so poor as do them reverence," unless it be an office holder or seeker. There is an unwillingness on the part of the great body of the people to repudiate the debt of the State; but the

FAILURE OF THE CROPS,

to some extent, and the tightness of money cause much discontent. By the present Revenue law horses, cattle, &c., are taxed which were heretofore exempt, and consequently all classes of persons are brought to feel the law's burdens. This necessarily renders the poor man dissatisfied, and I much fear its ultimate effect upon the honor and credit of the State. The entire railroad interest of the State has been sold, amounting to about $40,000,000, which was secured by statutory mortgages, and from which only about $14,000,000 has been realized, leaving the debt to be paid by taxation. Nothing but immigration and increase in the value of our lands will save the State from repudiation of her debt.

Our city has recovered from the scourges of the past year and

BUSINESS HAS RESUMED

again its wonted swing. Cotton is coming in in vast quantities, but is not bringing remunerative prices, as it costs the producer at least 13 cents; but the farmers are hopeful and are preparing for the coming crop and looking for better times in the spring.

CORONER'S INQUESTS IN NEWARK.

An inquest was held in Newark last evening on the body of one John Rauger, who was found dead at his house under suspicious circumstances. The doctor's evidence showed that death resulted from excessive drinking. A verdict was rendered accordingly. In the case of William Sipp, who was found dead in the house of Kate McLaughlian, the inquest will be concluded to-day. The woman is held without bail.